



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **MS-13 GANG MEMBER DEPORTED FROM BUFFALO**

*21-Year-Old had History of Violent Assault*

BUFFALO, N.Y.—A violent MS-13 gang member with a history of assaults, including assaults of New York State Corrections Officers, was returned to his native El Salvador late last week by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention and removal officers.

Emerson Zelaya had convictions for robbery as a juvenile and attempted assault as an adult. While serving a 1- to 3-year sentence for the latter crime, he assaulted two corrections officers. Zelaya received an additional 3-year sentence after being convicted of assaulting. Buffalo ICE Office of Detention and Removal carried out the deportation with assistance from New York City ICE officers.

“This known gang member was a threat to the public while he was on the street,” said Buffalo Field Officer Director William M. Cleary. “Every time a gang member is deported from the United States our communities become a bit safer. These criminals come to this country not to live the American dream, but to prey on the American people.”

In the past month the Buffalo Field Office has removed eight gang members, including members of the Esquardon, the Big Kings, the Mexican Boys, MS-13, and the Trinitarios.

The deportations are the latest under Operation Community Shield, a national initiative aimed at disrupting and dismantling violent gangs. To accomplish this, ICE is employing its broad immigration authorities, both criminal and administrative, and at the same time, using its customs authorities to target narcotics smuggling and money laundering and to seek the forfeiture of assets.

To date, ICE agents, working with federal, state and local law enforcement partners have arrested more than 400 MS-13 members nationwide.

Operation Community Shield draws on strong partnerships and cooperation with existing federal, state and local anti-gang efforts. Such partnerships are essential to the success of the initiative and to ensure officer safety during operations.

ICE has also taken several new steps to help other federal, state, and local agencies identify and target gang members. ICE's Law Enforcement Support Center (LESC) in Vermont is playing a critical role in this effort. The center runs MS-13 and other gang member data provided by state and local law enforcement agencies through various ICE and Homeland Security databases to help the agencies identify and locate violent gang members.

ICE also works through its 54 Attaché offices overseas to cooperate with foreign governments that are also experiencing gang problems, particularly those in Central America.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*